Tel. No. BRISTOL 629392

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Southfield Road,
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10th July 1987

Dear Graham and Phillippa
Ian and Leonie,

Sorry for typing this letter but it means that I can get a copy because I want to say the same thing to all of you.

The reason for the letter is that my son Alex may try to contact you in the vague future when he is in Australia doing a bit of globe-trotting and rather than someone you have scarcely heard of gives you a phone call out of the blue I thought it would be better to drop you a line as provisional forewarning.

Alex is 21 and h as the Millar characteristics, i.e. blond hair, 6 ft tall and fresh complaxion. He has just finished at Cambridge University where he got a good 2/1 degree in geolofy & earth sciences. Having got that degree, he is going to embark on a career in a totally different subject..... merchant banking !

He will start work for Morgan Gran Guaranty (their spelling as they are American and invent their own version of the English Language). He has to start work on 9th February next year and will be in Manhattan for the first six months before taking up the job (proper) in London. In the meantime he has itchy feet and wants to see a bit of the World. He plans to fly first to Australia then to find his way around the Far East to various parts including Hong Kong and ultimately (perhaps) to return via the West Coast of America.

I don't blame him for wanting to see a bit of the World before he settles down in life. At a similar age I hitch-hiked around Europe to see how some of the rest of the World lived.

I hope that you will not mind if he does look you up at some (as yet unspecified) time, and I know if he ran into any problems you would help him out. However he is quite self sufficient. He has had to be. I have brought him up on my own (divorced) as a one parent family for the last ten years.

I sold my house and moved to this address at the beginning of this year. It is a nice two bedroom flat with smashing views over a golf course and wooded hills. Yet it has all the amenities of a village surrounded by the suburban City of Bristol. I suppose I am the last of the McDonald - Millar dynasty left in Bristol, but I enjoy life here and wouldn't move away. I still play a little hockey and cricket, but my activity there is becoming more involved off the field than on it. At 56 I suffer a little from knee trouble at times, however the social side of sport gives much pleasure.

Alex will have your addresses which I obtained with difficulty (and not too accurately through my sister, Mary, and amended by Tony and Judy. I think Tony is going to give Alex a contact or two in Los Angeles. I am not sure quite when he will fly out to Aussie as we are arranging a special cheap flight via a cricketing friend who works for TNT Skypack and plans at the moment are still somewhat vague due to the special deal which is being arranged. To be honest we dont know where the flight will land, and he doesn't mind where

By air mail
Par avion

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Royal Mail
1
GREAT BRITAIN
POSTAGE PAID

Mr & Mrs G. H. MILLAR
101 KAMERUKA ROAD
NORTHBRIDGE
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NEW SOUTH WALES 2063
AUSTRALIA

Aerogramme

Name and address of sender
JOHN McDONALD
7 FALCON COURT
WESTBURY-ON-TRYM
BRISTOL
Postcode BS9 3BQ

An aerogramme should not contain any enclosure

To op

Regardless of where in Australia he lands, Alex will be aiming to get to Sydney where he has an introduction of future employers Morgan Guaranty (alias J.P. Morgan, or whatever they call themselves in Sydney, and is hoping to get a couple of weeks work there just to see how their organisation funstions and at the same time to earn a little money to augment funds.

Anyway sorry for this curious letter out-of-the-blue. However if it works out the right way, I hope you will be happy to keep in touch with relations and you know that like my parents, I will always look after you and yours if you should be in this part of the world.

With the very best cousinly best wishes,

Aerogramme: a 'Royal Mail' product

Biographical Notes.

John McDonald was the son of Marjorie (nee Millar) and Don McDonald.

Being 14 years only than me, John was a favourite cousin especially as he had a motor bike.
We had lost touch, I did not know that he had married.
John had a sister Mary Edwards, having married a pharmacist in Newport, South Wales. They had two children, one of whom turned up her in Sydney but we lost touch again.
John was born at 15 Downs Park East, Bristol, also the original home of my father, James Desmond Millar. My father had 7 siblings of whom I only knew 4, Marjorie, Pat, who lived in Guildford; married but no children, and Hugh, also my godfather, who lived in Bristol and was a successful buusiness man in jewellery. He had two daughters Denise [who married Gordon and had two children one of whom as named Nicholas] and Marion [who married Michael Hall, had 2 children whose names escape me] . Finally Eileen known as Sue, who was unmarried and childless.
John's father Don McDonald worked for his brother in law Hugh and which led to, I more than suspect, inter familial tension.
Of the three unknown siblings of my father, I do know that a Millar married a Sinclair and a Sinclair married a Millar, that is a brother and sister married a brother and sister. Several off spring, one or more of whom went to live in Africa.
The reason for my recording this is my exasperation as someone interested in history, that ones own family remains substantially unknown! Bur there is a very good explanation for this. In terms of biology if we clumped together and did not have a bias towards geographic dispersion we would be less successful as a species. We very quickly form in-groups with a negative bias towards out-groups which may include cousins and in laws.
As an example, look at my own siblings and I , all born in Beckenham, Kent, now included in the London Borough of Bromley : Anthony Bruce [dob 5.10.41] now lives in Farnham, Surrey and no longer communicates. Graham Hugh [dob 1945] and Ian Desmond [dob 30.11.1948] both live in Sydney, Australia and no longer communicate. Melanie Ann [dob 14.3.1951] and Malcolm James [dob 25.2.19] live in South Africa and no longer communicate, although Malcolm and I remain in touch. I have noted that a similar pattern occurs in other families.

It would serve us all well if we had a better idea of the biological underpinnings of our human nature. Whilst we are said to be rational we act with irrationlality. And for very good reasons explained in the book "Irrationality" by Stuart Sutherland, 2007, who says at page 17 :
" …We are born with a set of 'biological drives', like hunger, thirst, sex, and the avoidance of pain, as well as with more elusive but still powerful motives like curiosity, or the urge to dominate or to belong to a group. The presence of such drives tends to make us put ourselves first. It can be and indeed has been argued that this is irrational. People are not fundamentally different from one another: my neighbour may be more or less intelligent, witty or handsome than I am, but he shares the same biological make-up, feels the same pain, and has similar joys and sorrows. Rationally I should put his happiness on a par with my own. Unfortunately this claim does not hold up. A person may argue that his own experience – his own pains and pleasures – are unique: only he can experience them. A person can even, without inconsistency, be a solipsist, that is he may believe that only he exists and that the outside world is a figment of his imagination: hence he is entitled to put himself first. …"

In conclusion we should speculate about Alex McDonald who did not actually appear in Sydney. Where is he now, how was the job at Morgan Guaranty, has he had children, how many cousins, even second cousins, is he in touch with now?